

SEPARATE SCHOOLS.

A SPEECH,

ON THE SUBJECT OF "SEPARATE SCHOOLS;" DELIVERED
BEFORE THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF ONTARIO AT ITS
ANNUAL SESSION IN THE CITY OF KINGSTON,
ON TUESDAY, 21ST OF JUNE, 1864,

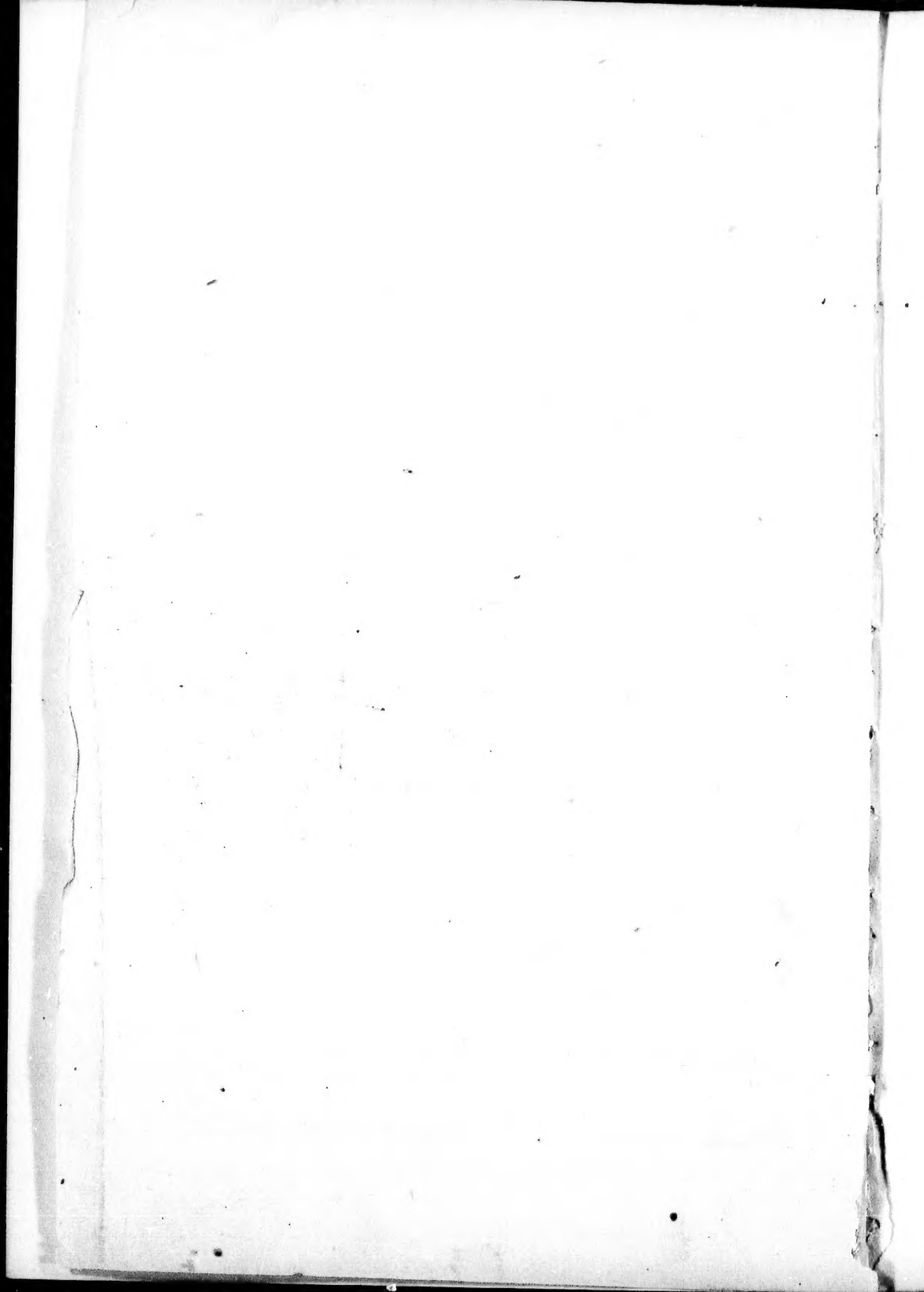
BY THE

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SPEECH .

MY LORD,—The resolution on the subject of Separate Schools for the United Church of England and Ireland in Canada, now before this Synod, was to have been seconded by a Clergyman of this city who has been obliged to absent himself to attend to urgent parochial duty; and I am therefore unexpectedly called upon by the mover to fill his place. I am not prepared to speak with unqualified approbation as regards *every word* contained in that measure; but I am nevertheless prepared and ready to advocate, with heartfelt pleasure and satisfaction, the great principles which it embodies; namely, that we members of the United Church of England and Ireland demand as our *right*, as an act of *common justice*, that we shall be permitted to educate our children according to our own religious convictions—that the giving this privilege to one body and withholding it from another is an “*unjust preference*,” and inconsistent with our individual rights as free-born citizens. Now we must all readily admit that there is scarcely any subject, involving the welfare of the rising generation, which has, within the last few years, attracted so much attention, or upon which men of all classes and shades of political, as well as religious, opinion, have indulged in such warm discussion as the present system of Common School Education as by law established in this Province.

At the fire-side of the mechanic and agriculturist; on the political platform; in the Halls of Parliament—by men of the lowest as well as of the highest attainments, the system by which the children of the masses of this country are instructed, has been more or less frequently and closely handled. And this is not so much to be wondered at. The interests of the child lie near and dear to the heart of the parent, and whatever affects the weal or woe of the human offspring touches a cord of the tenderest sympathy, and its vibrations are felt throughout whole families and

communities. The subject is one which most naturally and properly comes up for discussion before our Synod to-day. We are here a *representative* body. The members of our communion in this Diocese have entrusted to us the discharge of important duties concerning our common welfare; and if there is one duty more than another which possesses a claim upon our careful consideration it is that which we owe to our children—those who shall succeed us in the performance of those responsible obligations which are due to religion and humanity. I am therefore, for one, obliged to the mover of the resolution before the Synod for affording us the opportunity of discussing this important question, and I trust that we shall in the spirit of christian love and forbearance, while making full allowance for the opinions of others, at the same time in the most *straightforward* and *uncompromising* manner, assert upon it our views and convictions. But to do that justice to the Common School System of Education which it demands, and to understand it thoroughly, we must unravel the thread of its history from the beginning.

From the establishment of Common Schools in Upper Canada until the year 1846 we do not find anything remarkable, or worthy of comment. But on the 27th of March of that year, we are furnished with an ably written Report published from the pen of the talented Chief Superintendent (Dr. Ryerson) and setting forth a *system of public elementary instruction for Upper Canada*, and addressed to Earl Cathcart, then Governor General. In that document are marked the principles and outlines of the system which was afterwards adopted and embodied in the laws of the Province; the Report is therefore of great importance in throwing light on the scheme under consideration. On page 22nd Dr. Ryerson undertakes to define "*practical education*." "*Practical education*," he says, "includes religion and morality. By religion and morality I do not mean Sectarianism in any form, but the general system of truth and morals taught in Holy Scriptures." Now the dissatisfaction which has been felt with the Common School system of Education having arisen *wholly* on *religious* grounds, we as a religious body are bound to express our views, in discussion on this question, with special regard to this fact. It may be truly

said then at the very outset, that if the definition which Dr. Ryerson has given of "religion and morality" mean anything, it means what we, members of the Church of England, understand it to mean; and if the system of education afterwards adopted were erected on this foundation, then we should be found this day giving it our earnest and unreserved support. By "religion and morality" we cannot mean anything else than the "system of truth and morals taught in Holy Scripture;" nor can we mean by this system "Sectarianism in any form." Such a belief is strictly in accordance with our creeds, our articles, and other formularies of faith. We take Christ as our foundation, who Himself asserted that "*He was the Truth*, and that He came on earth to "bear witness of the truth." We believe that the *whole* volume of scripture not only *contains* truth, but *is truth from beginning to end*, truth in its purity and perfection because *inspired* truth; "so that" as our 6th article affirms "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." And if the term *Sectarianism* mean the teaching of a sect, and if a sect mean a "religious community following some particular master," then, my Lord, we are not a sect, and the reproachful words in which Dr. Ryerson has clothed his description of *Sectarianism* do not apply to ourselves as a Church. We are at a loss indeed to understand how the word "*sect*" can be at all applied to the *Church* from which members have separated, as well as to the *separated members themselves*. The thing is a manifest contradiction. But whether we are a sect, or not a sect—whether we have any higher claims to Catholicity than any other body of christians in the world, we shall not now stop to discuss. It is sufficient for our argument to assert, what admits of no discussion, that we are a *christian community holding certain distinctive principles as such*; and as Dr. Ryerson's attack is directed against *such doctrines*, which he is pleased to designate "*Sectarian*" and "*exclusive*" throughout his report, we, being ranked amongst the common enemy, are called upon to buckle on our armour in self-defence. Now I maintain that every religious body in the world *must, of necessity, hold exclusive and distinctive*

principles. The very Bible itself, the ground of our salvation, is *distinctive* and *exclusive*. We, members of the Church of England, are free to confess that we do hold and have ever held *distinctive* principles—that is the *principles of the Bible, according to the Church's interpretation*. These, moreover, we maintain to be *vital* principles, and we cannot consent to any system of education, as *sound* and *complete*, which professes, for the sake of establishing a *national* scheme, to set aside such awfully important and life-giving truths for so poor a substitute, however ingeniously contrived, as mere “christian sentiment,” or a plausible, hollow and unintelligible morality, which professes to extinguish all theological peculiarities by the waters of non-sectarianism, and to amalgamate all conflicting creeds by the quick-silver of the Common School System of Education.

But strange to say this self same report goes on to recognize the “*Separate School system*”—to speak even *approvingly* of “schools in connection with a particular religious community—wholly controuled by such a community, and where its worship is observed, and its creed taught.” But yet in the very next paragraph the author *avers* “from personal experience and practice, as well as from a very extended inquiry on this subject, that a much more comprehensive course of biblical and religious instruction *can* be given than there is likely to be opportunity for in Elementary Schools, without any restraint on the one side, or any tincture of sectarianism on the other—a course embracing the entire history of the Bible, its institutions, cardinal doctrines and morals, together with the evidences of its authenticity.”

Now I would respectfully ask, taking one point from this catalogue, “what are the *cardinal* doctrines” here mentioned; and in what school, or schools, in the whole Province under the Common School system is the course here recommended adopted?

Are there not diversities of opinions upon the subject? Are there not as many opinions in fact as there are Religious Bodies? The Churchman may say Infant Baptism is one. The Ana-Baptist and Quaker may say no. The Methodist may say “Christian perfection” is one. The Presbyterian and Independent may deny.

The Churchman may again say the "Trinity" is a *cardinal* doctrine. The Socinian and Arian may object. Here we might multiply instances *ad infinitum* to show the disagreement on this point alone. Who then is to decide? Who is to reconcile? Not the Chief Superintendent. He has no power to do so. Not the Council of Instruction, nor the Local Superintendents, nor the Trustees, nor the Municipal Councils for the same reason. No, nor the *Teacher himself*; for *he is not responsible* for the *religious* instruction of his pupils. How can he? He is not examined on *religious* subjects himself. He may be a *first class* teacher and at the same time a Rationalist or a Sceptic! If he is a man of *good moral* character, no school law or school officer can touch him. But I am doing the Chief Superintendent wrong. He does not say such a course *is* taught, only it *can* be taught; and by his sophistry and adroitness he leaves us to infer that by such a system as he proposes these advantages would be gained.

If in our mixed schools he can accomplish this, and at the same time respect the *rights of conscience*, as he professes in his school law to do, then he will accomplish something beyond human conception. He will then reconcile truth with error. He will prove that heresy has nothing to do with doctrines at variance with those of Christ—that schism is an agreement in matters of faith and discipline—that Arianism and Socinianism and Antinomianism and Sabellianism and Mormonism, with the hundred other "isms," are so many streams all issuing from the same pure fountain head and united in the one vast river of *antisectionarianism*, are flowing gently and peaceably onward by the irresistible influence of this commendable system!

Has such a system been carried out? Have religion and morality and secularity been so effectually blended together in our Common Schools? If so, wherefore then the still-beginning, never-ending agitation on the question at issue? Simply because the system proposed and persevered in—tho' with continual changes and modifications—is *unsatisfactory*—Because like all other systems of the kind—it is a system of *expediency*, not of duty,—a system decked out in flattering but fictitious allurements to captivate and beguile the popular mind—Because no *National* system

of education can be devised by which an efficient course of *religious* instruction can be given to all in every section in our mixed schools, so long as there exist—as there *must*, in *such* schools—*conscientious differences as to the doctrines and practices of the Christian religion*. I maintain therefore, my Lord, that, while I am not arguing who is right or who is wrong, in the religious world, the present system of education is most unsatisfactory and unacceptable to *us members of the Church of England* so far as the element of *religious* instruction is concerned; and I also maintain that, without interfering in any way with the present excellent course of *secular* instruction given in our Common Schools, such a measure may be adopted as will be acceptable and satisfactory to us and remedy the difficulty. I say most emphatically and advisedly “*excellent course of secular instruction* ;” for while with many others I am dissatisfied with the *religious*, I am most favourably impressed with the *secular*, system adopted. I am not ready with some to advocate the *destruction* of the system as a whole. I would advocate a *modification*. I would take advantage of the present machinery of instruction, examination and inspection. I speak regarding the whole department not as a mere theorist, or novice. I have held the office of Chairman of two Boards of Public Instruction, and been Superintendent of Schools for a number of years in this Province; and as the result of my experience I give it as my unqualified opinion, that the *secular* instruction imparted is the very *contrast* of the *religious*. I have always looked upon the Common School System as *essentially a secular system*, and as such I have always endeavoured to promote the secular education of those connected with our schools, whether as teachers or pupils. I saw from the commencement the great difficulty and absurdity of attempting the inculcation of a course of religious instruction in schools constituted as ours are, and therefore I have never endeavoured to enforce what I saw would be a cause of jealousy and dissatisfaction. But taking the *subjects taught*, the *text-books* recommended and the *whole apparatus*, and I do believe that, *as far as the course extends*, we have no better or more practical, useful or efficient instruction given in the *secular* branches of education in any school, or scholastic institution in the country. I can bear testimony to

the ability, the diligence and the courtesy displayed by the Chief Superintendent and Deputy-Superintendent in the discharge of their onerous duties. I have always found them ready to remove any ground of complaint and afford every explanation in their power consistently with the position which they occupy in the education department. Surrounded with difficulties as a national system must necessarily be, so far as the *religious* element is concerned, I am ready to make liberal allowances; but I must not at the same time barter my religious birth-right, or stifle the voice of conscience. I do not therefore desire to disturb that noble establishment in its *secular* department because I do not see how a better could be substituted. I wish it to be clearly understood that I stand not here to raise any mere *factionous* opposition; but now that the matter is fairly before our Synod, I cannot, as a churchman and clergyman, conscientiously and faithfully discharge my duty as such, without protesting against the system of *religious* instruction recommended by the Council of Public Instruction and authorized by the school laws of Upper Canada.

But it is not just to dwell merely on a Report; or to make the Chief Superintendent responsible for the discrepancies and inconsistencies which, in places, occur between the provisions of the school law and the principles advocated in his report; for those who have taken any trouble to examine the subject will admit, that many of his school bills have been, from time to time, materially altered and modified on their passage thro' the House. Let us see, however, *how far* the views advocated in his Report are developed in the school acts of the Province:

The school law of 1850; the supplementary act of 1853; the amended act of 1860, and the school laws consolidated in the same year—these, with slight amendments, from time to time, contain the common school law of Upper Canada. The school law of 1850 (in which the two previous acts of the 7th and 12th Vict. were repealed) may be justly styled the parent law of the whole system. In carefully examining this act we find the following provision:

"XIX. And be it enacted, That it shall be the duty of the Municipal Council of any Township, and of the Board of School Trustees of any City, Town, or incorporated Village, on the application in writing of

twelve or more resident heads of families, to authorize the establishment of one or more separate schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics or coloured people, and, in such case, it shall prescribe the limits of the divisions or sections for such schools, and shall make the same provision for the holding of the first meeting for the election of Trustees of each such separate school or schools, as is provided in the fourth section of this Act for holding the first school meeting in a new school section; Provided always, that each such separate school shall go into operation at the same time with alterations in school sections, and shall be under the same regulations in respect to the persons for whom such school is permitted to be established, as are Common Schools generally: Provided secondly, that none but coloured people shall be allowed to vote for the election of Trustees of the separate school for their children, and none but the parties petitioning for the establishment of, or sending children to a separate Protestant or Roman Catholic school, shall vote at the election of Trustees of such school: Provided thirdly, that each such separate Protestant, or Roman Catholic, or coloured school shall be entitled to share in the school fund according to the average attendance of pupils attending each such separate school, (the mean attendance of pupils for both summer and winter being taken,) as compared with the whole average attendance of pupils attending the Common Schools in such City, Town, Village or Township: Provided, fourthly, that no Protestant separate school shall be allowed in any school division except when the Teacher of the Common School is a Roman Catholic, nor shall any Roman Catholic separate school be allowed except when the Teacher of the Common School is a Protestant. Provided fifthly, that the Trustees of the Common School sections within the limits of which such separate school section or sections shall have been formed, shall not include the children attending such separate school or schools, in their return of children of school age residing in their school sections."

The peculiar items in this clause are:

1. That Separate Schools for *Protestants, Roman Catholics, or coloured people*, may be established.
2. That the necessary conditions are (1); that a *Roman Catholic* must be the teacher of the Common School before a *Protestant* Separate school can be formed and *vice versa*; (2) and, next, that it cannot be established on a petition of less than *twelve* resident heads of families.

Now these very items, or main characteristics, are the very grounds to which we take exception, and which have prevented the working of the bill. I am considering this matter, I wish it clearly to be understood, from a *Church of England* point of view. Other religious bodies concerned may, or may not, be satisfied with the provisions of this Separate School act, I, as a member of the Church of England, object to the leading features which it presents. (1) I object in the first place to its not being sufficiently

expressive or definite. We know what a *Roman Catholic* means. We understand the signification of the term "*coloured people*"; but we are not so clear as to the word *Protestant*. What does a Protestant mean? Ecclesiastical history informs us that the name was once given to those who protested against a certain decree issued by Charles V and the Diet of Spires in the year 1529. On the continent of Europe while Calvinists are called Reformed. Lutherans are called Protestants. With us it is a mere term of *negation*. It means that a Protestant is a person who is *not* a Romanist; altho' he may at the same time be a Socinian or a Sceptick for that matter; for they both are united in protesting against Popery and therefore they are Protestants. This term Protestant moreover is not satisfactory to *other* religious bodies who are *not* Romanists, and therefore they are forced to adopt other more intelligible designations—hence we have the Irvingites, New Jerusalemites, Destructionists, Dunkers, Shakers, and so on. Now altho' other Protestant bodies may protest against Romish errors as well as ourselves we cannot agree with them as to *their own* distinctive religious views, we protest against many of them; therefore we cannot consent that our children should be taught *in common* with them religious doctrines which we do not believe, until that happy day arrives, which we all earnestly hope for, when *unity* may be again restored. We see then that no separate school could be reared on this broad basis of a community of creeds, altho' in one sense they may all rank under one common banner—the banner of Protestantism. The distinction between Protestant and Roman Catholic is therefore not sufficiently defined. Had the clause read "*Catholic, Roman Catholic, or any other religious body*", it would have met our wishes and, with other minor alterations granted, would have been accepted and acted on wherever practicable. It would at the very commencement have effectually prevented the manifestation of so much dissatisfaction amongst those holding conflicting opinions on religious questions—the principle of "*individual right*" would not as now stand on the statute book as an empty phrase, but become a fact, a reality; for not to ourselves alone but to every other religious body would the right be conceded of *educating their own children according to their own faith*.

2. I object in the second place to this Act because it makes it necessary that a Roman Catholic should be the teacher of the Common School *before* you can take one step to establish a Protestant separate school. This is, I will not say unfair, or unjust merely; but an *absurdity*, and altogether inconsistent with the whole school system. Why, let me ask, with all respect to the framers of the law,—why should such a condition be demanded. So long as no *religious test* is required of teachers and so long as they dare not teach, if they even were competent, any *distinctive* religious creed, what is the practical difference to us whether the teacher of the common school be a Roman Catholic, or the professor of any other faith?—none whatsoever.

3. The last objection to this act is that its requirement is too stringent regarding the number of heads of families within the section who must sign a petition before a separate school can be allowed. I am nevertheless disposed to think that the object was a most praise-worthy one which induced the framer to insert this requirement. The idea was, no doubt, not to encourage the multiplication of small schools, which would be a great evil indeed and should be carefully guarded against; but by the scheme which I shall hereafter suggest children of *other religious* bodies would not be excluded from separate schools in sections where they would happen to be in the minority, but receive all the benefits which are now derivable from the present system. Besides the present law gives Roman Catholics the privilege on the petition of *five* heads of families, which shows that it was found that the objection which I have here raised was not unworthy of consideration. We have therefore a right to demand that a similar privilege should be conferred on ourselves. But there is one other clause in this act of 1850, bearing on the question of *religious* instruction, to which I invite your special attention. I refer to section 14th, act of 1850, which is as follows:—

XIV. " And be it enacted, That no foreign books in the English branches of education shall be used in any Model or Common School, without the express permission of the Council of Public Instruction; nor shall any pupil in any such School be required to read or study in or from any religious book, or join in any exercise of devotion or religion, which shall be objected to by his or her parents or guardians: Provided always, that, within this limitation, *pupils shall be allowed to receive such religious in-*

siruction as their parents and guardians shall desire, according to the general regulations which shall be provided according to law."

Here are two enactments, the one negative, the other positive. The one declaring what shall not be done—the other what shall be done. The one recognizing the principle for which we have been contending—the other making a provision to which we cannot subscribe. Foreign books are very properly to be excluded. No child is to receive the religious instruction to which his parent objects. Here "individual rights" are recognized. This is unobjectionable. But what follows?—"children are to be allowed to receive such religious instruction as their parents and guardians shall desire; but *this instruction is to be according to the general regulations which shall be provided according to law.*" Now this whole section of the act converges to one point—the "*general regulations.*" What are they? Where to be found? There is not any *direct* or *specific* statute as to what these *general regulations* are in this or any other school act of Upper Canada. But chapter 48th, in defining the *constitution and duties of the Council of Public Instruction* (section 38th sub-section 4th), gives power to this body (which is to be composed of not more than nine persons, including the Chief Superintendent, and appointed by the Governor-General) to "*make regulations for the organization and government of the schools generally.*" Turning to these regulations we have defined the "*nature and extent of the religious exercises and the special religious instruction given to pupils.*"

The Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada makes the following *regulations and recommendations* :

1. "The public religious exercises of each school shall be a matter of mutual voluntary arrangement between the Trustees and Teacher; and it shall be a matter of mutual voluntary arrangement between the Teacher and the parent or guardian of each pupil, as to whether he shall hear such pupil recite from the Scriptures, or Catechism, or other summary of religious doctrine and duty of the persuasion of such parent or guardian. Such recitations, however, are not to interfere with the regular exercises of the school.

2. But the principles of religion and morality should be inculcated upon all the pupils of the school. What the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland state as existing in schools under their charge, should characterize the instruction given in each school in Upper Canada. The Commissioners state that "in the National Schools the importance of religion is constantly impressed upon the minds of children, through the works calculated to promote good principles and fill the heart with love

for religion, but which are so compiled as *not to clash* with the doctrines of any particular class of Christians.⁴ In each school the Teacher should exert his best endeavours, both by example and precept, to impress upon the minds of all children and youth committed to his care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, human and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornament of society, and on which a free constitution of government is founded; and it is the duty of each Teacher to endeavour to lead his pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the above mentioned virtues, in order to preserve and perfect the blessings of law and liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness, and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices."

This first regulation seems to present a great many attractions; but on close examination it is defective and unsatisfactory in every particular. The first clause leaves it in fact an *open question* as to whether there shall be any religious exercises in the school at all! It is to be a matter of *mutual voluntary arrangement* between Trustees and Teacher. The yea or nay, if either, settles the question. If it is decided in the negative then there is no clause to enjoin, or compel. But if in the affirmative, then there is to be another mutual voluntary arrangement between the Teacher and Parent before any further step can be taken, as regards the *religious formulary* to be used. If either objects, here the matter may terminate; for, as in the former case, there is no injunction. It is a mere "*mutual voluntary arrangement*." The Parent is thus altogether in the hands of the Teacher. But if both agree then we have, *very cautiously worded*, the nature of the religious instruction, or rather of the religious exercise, for it is not instruction. The Teacher is merely to "*hear the pupil recite from the Scripture, or Catechism, or other summary*" Thus the exercise after all is to be a mere *mechanical* operation—a recitation—a rehearsal! How does this mode of instruction compare with the system laid down for teaching the *secular* branches.

In the Report just alluded to, the best and most approved methods are appealed to as examples, which are worthy of imitation, of the mode of instruction in reading, history, and other subjects. The prominent countries in the world are brought before you—their systems of instruction are analyzed—their books are pondered over—their great masters examined and quoted.

Mere mechanical reading is repudiated and characterized as "rote-learning," "word-mongery" &c., and the principle of *thorough explanation, and perfectly understanding what you read* is strongly recommended. But in the writings which teach *duty* instead of *expediency*—which prepare us not only for time but eternity—which inculcate the highest of all interests, a *thorough* acquaintance is not deemed desirable or necessary! And to bring the whole of this first paragraph to a climax—the regulation reserved for the close is one of infinite beauty and sublimity. "Such recitations, however, are *not to interfere* with the regular exercises of the school." Hazardous in the extreme, as I have just shown, as was the *bare chance* of their introduction at all—yet once introduced, such as they are, they are to be of only secondary consideration—the *secular* business of the school is to be paramount. These religious exercises may be heard *if convenient*, if not, they may be passed by with impunity! They are not to interfere with the regular, that is the *secular*, exercises of the school!

But the second regulations advance further. They boldly encounter the difficulty. They actually venture to speak of the inculcation of the *principles of religion and morality*; and the teacher is required to instruct *all* his pupils both by precept and example. Now, on behalf of the parents, I would desire to know what is to inspire their *confidence* in the teacher's competency for giving the required instruction? He is obliged, as already remarked, to "furnish satisfactory proof of good moral character"—beyond this there is *no religious test or qualification required*. Here is another proof of the *purely secular* nature of the entire system, notwithstanding its religious professions. With the *secular* branches the teacher must be well acquainted, according to the certificate which he holds. A programme of qualification is made out—text books are carefully selected—examiners are elected—Superintendents are appointed. Trustees are actually liable for the teacher's salary, and may be *fined* for neglect of duty, if they engage a teacher who has not complied with these requirements. The parents are therefore assured upon reliable testimony of the *secular* attainments of those who are to teach their children. But as to their religious knowledge they have none whatsoever. The

certificate of moral character is easily attained. The teacher may produce this, and yet actually not know how many Gospels the New Testament contains. He may be a believer, or an unbeliever—a follower of George Fox, or of Brigham Young—an any-thing-arian, or a nothing-arian; and yet he is *empowered* by this regulation to teach *all* the children of the school “religion and morality” !!!

But let us view this regulation in another point of view. Let it be granted, for sake of argument, that the teacher *is* qualified, and that the fact is established for the parents satisfaction by reliable testimony. What then? This very regulation guards the teacher in giving religious instruction (after the example of the Irish National system) against inculcating any principles “which would *clash* with the doctrines of *any* particular class of christians.” Here the difficulty which has been saturating this system, begins to rise and swell; and by and by, if unrestrained, will burst the mounds which had been thrown up to withhold it, and threaten not merely loss and injury, but general destruction. A competent teacher is to give religious instruction to all his pupils; but he is at the same time to *pass over* the *cardinal, distinctive, essential* doctrines of Christianity, and this is the system which we are told in the chief Superintendent’s Report *can* be given without any restraint on the one side, or any tincture of sectarianism on the other.” I must say, my Lord, with the soundness and practicability of such a proposition I cannot agree. From any effort to carry it into effect, I apprehend the most serious consequences. Now let us try and realize this system in operation. Let us suppose a class marshalled before the teacher for religious instruction. The previous lesson contained the assurance from St. Paul to Timothy that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The lesson just read by the class was the following chapter. The children desire to know what is meant by the verse which says “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine”—and again where it says in the same lesson “they shall turn away their ears from the truth,” and “shall be turned unto fables.” These latter words may seem to the

teacher of rather a *prophetic* character, and very applicable to the times in which he lives and the very *manner* in which he is restricted as to the duty assigned him. He must however refuse any explanation. Or suppose questions are asked regarding such expressions as "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"—or, "the Word was God"—or, "I and my Father are One"—or, "the fire that never shall be quenched." What is the teacher to do? He has no discretion. If he interprets these passages, the deniers of "the *Divinity of Christ*," of "the *Sacrament of the Eucharist*," of the "*Unity of the Father and the Son*," of "*Everlasting punishment*," are all down upon him for daring to wound their religious feelings, or teach their children doctrines at variance with their convictions. The Universalist and the Destructionist; the Arian and the Socinian, unite in their condemnation of the unfortunate teacher. Or if he refuses to interpret, he does so on the ground that his instruction is "*not to clash with the religious views of any.*" What is the detrimental consequence? The children are sharp enough to draw conclusions in their own minds. They are sufficiently intelligent to make a comparison between the *mode* in which they are taught reading, and grammar, and history; and that in which they are taught the Holy Scriptures. They see that there is comparison, and explanation, and illustration in the one case; but that there is not merely hesitation or evasion, but *actual refusal* in the other. They come to the natural conclusion that the former is of more importance than the latter—that part of the Bible is important, and the remainder unimportant—in fact a dead letter. What but such a belief as this led the "unstable and unlearned," even in our Lord's days, "to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction?" What was the foundation of the heresy of Simon Magus and the Gnostics, but a belief in part and a rejection of the rest of revelation? What is the cause of the scepticism and rationalism of the present day but the very same—an assertion that the *whole* Bible is *not* the inspired word of God? I maintain therefore that such a system of religious instruction is calculated to do more harm than good; and while it aims at satisfying and respecting the consciences of all, it

neither satisfies nor respects the consciences of any; but on the contrary sows the seed in the youthful mind of doubt and prejudice, which, if not checked, may in maturer years, produce the fruits of apostacy and infidelity! But I must not, in justice to the Common School system, fail in conclusion to notice one other regulation with regard to religious education from the Council of Public Instruction.

Passing on from the regulations already examined we find no alteration or amendment until 1855: and on the 13th Feb. of that year a minute was published recommending the "opening and closing of the schools by reading a portion of Scripture and by Prayer." This was a step in the right direction; but owing to the differences on religious matters, it has only been partially adopted. Trustees in my own superintendency and elsewhere have assured me that in the face of prevailing prejudices they have been deterred from carrying out so good an arrangement. The regulation moreover upon which we have already dwelt respecting *religious recitations* has now, for whatever reason, been expunged; and the only substitute is a change in the religious *Instructors*.

In the year 1857 we thus find by a minute dated 22nd April:

"That in order to correct misapprehensions, and define more clearly the rights and duties of Trustees and other parties in regard to religious instruction in connection with the Common Schools, it is decided by the Council of Public Instruction, that the *Clergy* of any persuasion, or their *authorized representatives*, shall have the right to give religious instruction to the pupils of their own Church, in each Common School house, *at least once a week, after the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon*; and if the Clergy of more than one persuasion apply to give religious instruction in the same school house, the trustees shall decide on what day of the week the school house shall be at the disposal of the clergyman of each persuasion, at the time above stated. But it shall be lawful for the Trustees and Clergymen of any denomination to agree upon *any other hour of the day* at which such Clergyman or his authorized representative may give religious instruction to the pupils of his own church, *provided it be not during the regular hours of the school.*"

1. The first objection to this regulation is of the same nature as that made to the concluding part of a former one, namely that the time appointed for religious instruction "must not be during the regular school hours." This gives *religion* an *inferior* place in the daily course of instruction. It almost discards in fact the *religious element* altogether.

2. Again, the appointment of 4 o'clock as the hour for such in-

struction is subject to a very serious objection. What child after six hours confinement in school would be physically fitted for any further mental exercise. Is the Bible to be thus presented in its most unattractive form—is it to be made a mere task-book—a mere engine of punishment? Besides the inclemency of the weather and the shortness of the days during a considerable portion of the year, would operate against carrying out successfully any such rule, especially in the country sections; and the appointment of *any* hour before, as well as after, the regular school hours, would, on the same grounds, be equally objectionable. Cannot religious instruction be so arranged that it shall be included in the regular exercises of each day, preceding or following the secular instruction, or both; and thus be, and be accounted, *not* an “engine of punishment” but an instrument of moral culture and of religious improvement? Our tastes are naturally inclined to do evil rather than good; and we should adopt every reasonable method to draw out the child’s desires and affections towards religious exercises and duties, rather than impose them as a sort of extra study or punishment.

3. But the radical objection to this regulation is still to be advanced. I do not object to the clergy *as teachers*. This is their duty wherever they go—in the pulpit or out of the pulpit; but I do object to the *impracticability* of their *weekly* visits to the schools within their charge. In cities and large towns such an arrangement may—tho’ we can conceive attended with difficulty—be acted on. But in the country districts where schools are scattered over a wide territory and clergymen have long distances to travel, I maintain, as the result of my own experience of twelve years, and of the experience of other clergymen in this diocese and over Canada, that to give *even one hour a week*, which “*must not interfere with the regular school hours*,” is an *utter impossibility*. There are few parishes in which there are not from 20 to 25 schools—I believe the average would be greater. Now let a clergyman give but one hour a week to each of these schools and his whole time would be so fully occupied as to leave none remaining for his other pastoral duties. In fact his other duties would so interfere with this, that it could not possibly be perform-

ed with any degree of satisfaction or efficiency. But why should not religion occupy a more prominent place? Why, as I have already said, should it not form the subject of *daily* instruction? Why should not the *Master*, or *Mistress*, of the school be examined in *religious* as well as secular knowledge? Why should not such Master or Mistress be required to give *daily* religious instruction, and be *responsible* for such instruction? Let the school law be amended so as to give us separate schools in the manner suggested. Let the objectionable regulations be cancelled, or made not to apply to such schools. Let our Synod appoint District Boards, whose duty it would be to prepare a programme of religious subjects for examination—to examine and to grant certificates as to the *religious* attainments of the teachers. Let the clergy visit as often as practicable the schools in their respective missions or parishes, for the purpose of examining, advising, and encouraging both teachers and pupils. In all other matters let the whole machinery of the present system work *without any interruption*. Then religious instruction would become a *reality*, an *advantage*, a *blessing*. But I can understand the grounds on which objections may be raised to this system.

1. One objection may be that by this arrangement those in the minority (who would therefore be unable to have a separate school for themselves) would suffer; for they would thus be left without any school whatever. To this I reply that by a "Church of England Separate School" I mean a school whose teacher should be a member of that faith—competent to teach the religious creed of that church, but also competent, as now required, to give secular instruction—a school subject in secular matters to the same law and the same inspection as other schools now are; and at the same time a school to which the children of other religious bodies, (Protestants, or Roman Catholics) would be admitted, and receive the same attention in secular instruction as the separate school pupils. This is a mere rough outline of a scheme which might be amended and established by law. It would guarantee to the minority all the privileges of a *secular* education, and therefore place them in at least *as good a position* as they now hold, without interfering with their religious scruples. And where our members would be

in the minority should other religious bodies being in the majority demand separate schools, such a provision would secure to us the same benefit which we would in turn extend to them in a different quarter. The time for religious instruction might be fixed say from 9 till 10 daily. The school might then re-open at 10, at which hour *all* children in the section might be required to commence their *secular* studies; and the remaining *five* hours would afford ample time for tuition in these branches.

2. Another objection is that separate schools would arouse amongst the children of different creeds feelings of animosity towards each other. I answer, the present system provides, by its last arrangement, separate classes, under separate religious instructors; if in separate schools we are liable to so dangerous a result we are much more liable to it when several classes receive exclusive instruction in the same school, and perhaps on the very same day. But where is the foundation for such an apprehension. Does it occur in our Sunday Schools, or in our churches; for they are essentially separate schools. We know of no instances of such a manifestation of hostile feeling. If, on the contrary, we discharge our duty aright, we will teach our children as a principle of moral right and religious duty, not only not to hate any one; but to "*love our enemies*"—and we fear no such evil consequences.

3. Another objection is that because Romanists have separate schools, we should not apply for them; as if a separate school meant of necessity, a school in which the doctrines of the Church of Rome are taught. As well might we be ashamed, or deterred from asking to be allowed to worship in our own churches, because the Church of Rome has separate churches. Such an objection is, to say the least, most unreasonable, arising as it does out of a mere empty prejudice. We imitate the *zeal* and the efforts of the Church of Rome to possess the rights and the privileges of British citizens to which they are entitled—not their errors which we impugn. And should we be induced, *even on the strongest grounds*, to look upon them as our most *hostile* foes, is not the ancient maxim correct and applicable? "*fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" We should be ready to do as did our pious ancestors in the days of the Reformation "*gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*" But

there are many who while they inveigh loudly and steadfastly against separate schools, nevertheless tacitly acknowledge all the while the *very principle* which they are condemning. What is Trinity College? What is Huron College? What are Victoria and Queen's and Knox's Colleges? What are the Congregational, the Baptist, and other institutions? What, but separate schools? And strange to say amongst the admirers and supporters of these establishments are found those who object to the principle of separate religious instruction in our *daily schools*: but admire it and support it in our *Colleges*! Why, on the principle of common right, should a man in easy circumstances be allowed by act of Parliament the privilege of educating his son in *College* in the *distinctive* principles of his creed; and the child of the humble man tho' as good, perhaps a better subject, be denied a like advantage for his child in the *Common School*? If the principle is wrong then let the rich man educate his son under his own roof. If it is right, as I maintain it is, then let there be no invidious or unjust distinctions. But we may be told perhaps that these are for the education of persons of *mature* years—those who have arrived at the age of discretion. To this I reply that although from 5 to 16 is the school age, numbers are admitted and do attend who are much older, especially during the winter months. But suppose this were not the case, the objection only fortifies my position; for if it is necessary to instruct those whose minds are developed, in the principles of their religious faith—a *fortiori*—how much stronger the argument for educating the child whose mind is pliable and susceptible—is easily moulded into every form whether right or wrong—how much more necessary that the tender intellect should be given every impression of Godliness—that “from childhood we should know the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation?”

So far I have endeavored to examine the Common School system from the beginning, and to point out the grounds of objection which every zealous and conscientious member of our communion must entertain towards it in a *religious* aspect, as well as to point the remedy which may be adopted. I am aware that there are many admirers and friends of the common

school system within the pale of our own church ; but strange to say its strongest supporters and most steadfast admirers seldom engage in its defence on the ground of *its own* merits, as regards the *efficiency* of the *religious* instruction which it imparts. If indeed it is ever so defended, the position is soon found to be untenable and at once deserted—the ground is at once ingeniously changed—the position shifted, and we are told with the utmost complaisantness that, if the religious instruction provided is insufficient we are to rely on *catechetical, parental, and Sunday School* instruction. I am fully sensible of the importance of all these channels of instruction ; but why should religious education be *confined* to them ? Why should *six hours daily* be systematically given up to *secular* instruction, and *an hour* on a Sunday, and *another now and then* during the working days be deemed sufficient for inculcating the *wisdom of the heart* ? Why should religion which is the “chief concern” receive the *least possible consideration* ? Is it in accordance with our duty inculcated in the Book of God ? I say it is not. I say it is insulting the Most High to his face—asserting our own will in opposition to His, and actually provoking the Almighty to visit us and the children He has given us with His sore displeasure. I am aware that there is a “Canon” making it the duty of our clergy to catechise in their churches ; but as well might you argue that the laity are never to open their Bibles and Prayer-books except within the walls of the House of Prayer ; as to say that the catechising of the clergy is to supersede other religious exercises. Then as regards Sunday-schools. In many localities, particularly in the country, there are either none, or the children reside at so great a distance from their churches that any thing like a regular attendance, for this and other reasons, is simply an impossibility. Then again as to parental instruction. How many parents are unfitted for this duty ? It is unjust to assume in this argument that *all* parents are moral and otherwise competent. There are many parents who are blasphemers, Sabbath-breakers, and intemperate. Are you to entrust the religious instruction of their children to such parents as these ? There are others, the best and the worthiest, who, from want of early advantages, are incompe-

tent. There are others, amongst the humbler walks of life, who are ready to do anything for their children, but who are obliged to work from sun-rise to sun-set to earn for themselves and families an honest livelihood—what can you expect from them? and how many are there amongst the best informed and most exemplary in all other respects, who, while they fully admit and realize the duty, discharge it irregularly, or in many cases, it is to be feared, not at all! But the work of *others*, is not our own work. The work of the Clergyman and of the Parent, and of the Sunday-school teacher is not the work of the Common School, and if all these means were in every respect practical and efficient and satisfactory, they would not in any wise relieve the present system of the charge of inefficiency which we have laid against it. No, my Lord, that charge must ever remain as a blot on the pages of its history, until the day arrives when “individual rights” shall be recognized and acted on—when the school law of the land shall set forth the principle of even-handed justice; and declare that permission is given to every parent to educate his own child according to his own religious convictions. For I hold that the parent has a right to adopt every legitimate means to instruct his child in the doctrines of his own creed, and that the child is bound to accept those doctrines. I hold—notwithstanding the Baptist’s peculiar views—that you can no more suspend your child’s religion, than postpone his morality till he has mastered the fundamental difficulties of either. This I hold to be a just and irresistible proposition, strictly in accordance with Scripture and sound philosophy, and not only consistent with the genius and spirit of the British Constitution; but a necessary ingredient in the free institutions of any free people. This is no narrow, or selfish, demand—it is no oppressive or one-sided measure. But that is one-sided and oppressive which grants to one section of the community a privilege which it withholds from another. Why should the Church of Rome possess separate schools and the Church of England be denied them? Are we less wealthy, less loyal, less devoted to our Queen and Country? Are we inferior in any respect? I say *no*—and I appeal to all history to prove the fact. Then we protest against unjust preferences—we repudiate party favours.

We stand on the broad platform of common right and universal justice; and we demand as free born citizens that "*we, members of the Church of England, shall be permitted to educate our children according to our own consciences*;" and that law, or that government which would deny, or suppress, such a principle, is not based on a wise policy, or true patriotism; for "piety is the soil in which alone true patriotism can flourish, and the real greatness and happiness of a country is the religious and moral purity of her children."